The WHITE ROAD OF MYSTERY

THE NOTE-BOOK OF AN AMERICAN AMBULANCIER

PHILIP DANA ORCUTT

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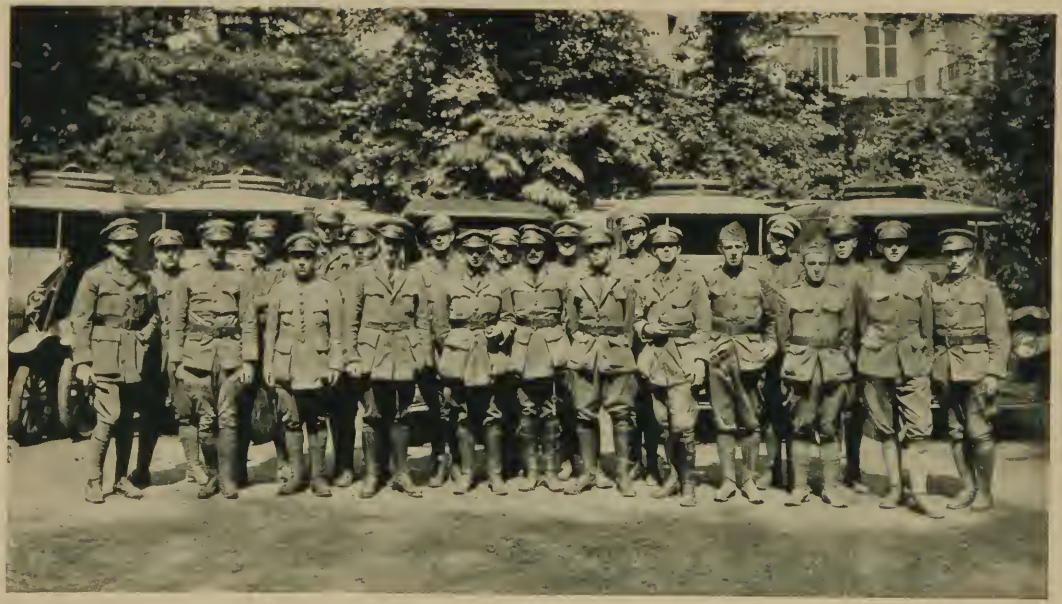

AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE, SECTION XXXI

at 21 rue Raynouard, Paris

The author is standing the seventh from the right

THE WHITE ROAD OF MYSTERY

THE NOTE-BOOK OF AN AMERICAN AMBULANCIER

BY

PHILIP DANA ORCUTT

AMERICAN AMBULANCE FIELD SERVICE

Section XXXI

Illustrated with Photographs

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1918

THE·PLIMPTON·PRESS
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To

SECTION THIRTY-ONE

TO ALL OTHER SECTIONS OF THE

AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

AND TO THOSE WHO HAVE

MADE THEM POSSIBLE

Preface

THE position of the ambulance driver at the front is much the same as that of the grouse in open season: every one has a chance to take a shot at him and he has no opportunity for retaliation. That is why so many drivers entered aviation or artillery at the expiration of their term of enlistment of six months.

This transferring came to an end when the American Government took over the Ambulance Service. From then on, all drivers have been of necessity enlisted men. The old American Ambulance, later called the American Field Service, was a purely volunteer organization, and had no connection with any government. It was made up of American citizens who left civil life, paying their

own expenses and furnishing their own equipment, and in many cases their ambulances. These men, feeling that America owed a debt to France, banded together to form the original American Ambulance Service, which they laid on the altar of their devotion to a true and great cause.

By virtue of the nature of his work the ambulance driver must always be in the warmest places, and has a really unusual opportunity to observe by moving from sector to sector and battle to battle what few other branches of the service can see.

I had the honor to be associated with Section XXXI of the American Field Service, and have endeavored to weave my simple tapestry from the swiftly-moving pictures of life "in the zone" and out of it, as they passed before me.

P. D. O.

BOSTON, *June*, 1918

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Prelude

THE *sweet, clear notes of a bugle come faintly up to me through the cool air of morning, and as the sound dies away I hear the great guns begin their bombardment, the rumbling echoes merging into the matin chimes wafted across the valley from some small church as yet unscarred by Mars.*

Reveille, the summons, calls man from his peaceful, prenatal slumber, rouses him and bids him prepare for what the world will send him. Man goes forth to meet the world, and struggles through his allotted time until the bells of God ring for him to fold himself in his soul and sleep.

I

THE WHITE ROAD OF MYSTERY

A SHARP whistle cuts the tense silence. It is the signal to start. It marks the line which breaks the past from the future; it is the boundary between the Known and the Unknown, and the frontier where duty and service merge. For a second, as the motors race, there is commotion — quickly settling into a rhythmic whir. The men are in their seats with somewhat of an echo of that whir in their hearts. The lieutenant's car rolls slowly out of the gate, followed by the *chef's*, and in turn by the others of the section, and as the last car crosses the threshold there is a cheer from the friends gathered to bid us Godspeed, — for Section XXXI is born.

WE are off. We do not know where we are going. After a number of interminable delays and halts we pass

through the gates of the city, and leave behind the last vestige of the Known. Ahead of us the road stretches white in the sunlight — the white road of mystery leading on to adventure and redemption. We have ceased to be our own masters. We are units, cogs in the machine, infinitesimal pawns in the giant game, and move as the dust which rises from the car ahead — where we know not, why we know not, — and how we often wonder!

CONVOY formation allows, by the book, for an interval of twenty feet between cars when passing through cities, and for one hundred feet when in the country. The flesh, however, is weak. In cities it is rare indeed to see cars separated by more than a nose except in spasms, while in the country a matter of miles is unimportant. A convoy is like a pack of dogs on the hunt, racing pell mell

up hill and down dale one minute, and crawling the next, with an occasional dog straying off and losing itself for an indefinite length of time.

For example, we come to some small town where we are to have lunch. We arrive in a hurry and with much dust, the first few cars in close formation, nose to tail, the last a few miles in the rear. Suddenly the driver of the leading car, who has been admiring the scenery on the right of the road, sees the *chef* standing on the left making frantic motions for him to stop. Perhaps the driver puts out his hand, perhaps he does not. At any rate, he applies the brakes and comes to a dead stop — for an instant. The driver of the second car may have been adjusting his carburetor or observing an aeroplane, or a peasant girl, or a map — the exact object is beside the question. He suddenly comes to earth when he finds his charge valiantly trying to climb over the car in front —

more brakes. Of course there is a third car, and possibly a fourth, or more, which demand attention. The final result advances the leading car some feet, decreases the supply of spare radiators, and as a rule does not contribute to the general harmony.

One or more cars must always have taken the wrong road, and lead a hare and hound chase for some minutes before the final roundup, leaving for clues numerous peasants who, when queried, always know just where it went. Of course, by the law of chance, some one of these has undoubtedly seen it, and the lost is eventually found.

There was one particular member of our section who was a rover at soul, and led several interesting hunts. A little later in the season this same rover took a by-road and started through the Hesse Forest for Germany. Our whole pack was called out, and after an exciting

chase he was finally caught and convinced of his error. Fortunately for both him and us the *chef* has a sense of humor, and the section, in spite of our many innocent attempts to disintegrate it and take individual excursions to different parts of France, continues to be a unit.

For five days we proceed thus, with the white road stretching out in front and the brown dust trailing behind. We stop to get gasoline, to eat, and to sleep. We begin to near the front, and pass through town after town of roofless houses, shattered churches, and scattered homes. Through fields dotted with wooden crosses with the tricolored ribbon, and pock-marked with shell-holes. We pass aeroplane hangars and batteries of guns. We see more *saucisses* in the sky and soldiers on the ground. The hand of the Hun lies heavy on the land, and his poison breath scorches the grass

of the fields. We see fewer civilians and more steel helmets, and yet the rumble of the guns is no louder. But there is a certain breath of power and energy in the air, and one feels himself waiting for something to happen.

Something does — an infuriated bull charges Rover's car and picks off one of his headlights. Rover reverses hastily and unhesitatingly into the car behind, while the farmer's wife makes her appearance, drives off the bull, and saves Rover from extermination.

Then, one afternoon, we arrive at our point of embarkation, so to speak. It is Bar-le-Duc, sixty kilometres from Verdun, and by virtue of its being the one city in many miles, the meeting place of the world, which is to say, of course, our sector of front — when *en repos*.

BAR-LE-DUC, the old stronghold of the feudal dukes of Bar, nestling in the

valley on the banks of the slow-moving Ornain, tributary to the River Marne, and with *la ville haute* trespassing far onto one ridge, and the ruined castle frowning down from the other, is a town of memories and traditions which greets this war as but another chapter in the never-ending book of its history. It has two large and ancient cathedrals, the one crowning the upper city — now quite naturally in ruins, as the enemy, by this time a connoisseur in churches, makes frequent air raids. The chateau — considered quite modern as it is but two hundred years of age — has mellowed into the surroundings by now, and forms a sufficiently integral part of the beauty of the city to be likewise a target for our "considerate" neighbor.

One evening, as the last rays of the sun glinted from its roof, it stood solid and strong, — ready to do battle with the elements for many centuries more,

but while the city lay quiet in the cold moonlight of an August night, the sound of purring motors broke the silence from above. The *contre-avions* crashed, and the yellow shrapnel broke in the sky often a mile from its invisible target, and never near enough to arrest the advance of the raiders, who suddenly shut off their motors and, as often before, swooped silently down on their motionless prey, and dropped their bombs. Then, turning on their motors, they climbed and glided over the city again and again until, having dropped their entire cargo, they flew off. But in the morning the chateau no longer stood proudly up from the river mist, and another buttress against the ravages of the elements had crumbled into untimely ruins.

The main street of the town is denuded of its plate glass, and more houses crumble each time the enemy reports "military

advantage gained" by an indiscriminate slaughter of the future crop of France's defenders, and those heroic souls who bear them.

The town is noted for its manufactures, its wines, and its *confitures*. As to the first-named I know little, but as to the merits of its wines, its *liqueurs*, and its *confitures* I cannot say enough, nor can many thousands of others who seek out Bar-le-Duc as the one sanctuary from the mud and deprivations of the rest of their existence, and bask gloriously in the discomforts of its civilization for a few stolen hours.

CONVOY formation again, the cars freshly washed and glistening in the sunlight, — for a few minutes, before the grey cloud of dust pouring from the cars in front settles on us again. We come to a turn. A large sign greets us, *Souilly — vers Verdun*, emphasized by a

giant arrow pointing in the direction we take. We are instantly sure that this is to be our headquarters. Verdun is a name we have long wished to visualize. At the first stop we tell each other the great news. While we are grouped in the road a big grey limousine carrying three generals dashes past. Every one salutes, and by a miracle we are noticed and the salute is returned. Cheerful Liar at once informs us that they were Joffre, Petain, and — he is at a loss for the third name. We help him out — Hindenburg perhaps.

But we are doomed to bitter disappointment. Thirty kilometres from the famous city we are given orders to park our cars in a pile of ruins formerly known as Erize — Erize la petite, and well named.

ERIZE is, without exception, the dullest place beneath the sun — a small town,

now a mass of crumbling ruins, holding not above two dozen civilians, who are, for the most part, still less interesting than the town. Of course, there are Grand'mère and Grand-père, no relation to each other, but so christened by us because they are the only two octogenarians here. Grand'mère is not properly from Erize. Her home is somewhere north of Verdun, in a town with an unpronounceable name and long since destroyed. She, herself, carries proudly on her wrinkled forehead a two-inch scar from shrapnel, and informs us tearfully that her two sons have died in action, "*pour la patrie*," she concludes, with a faint smile.

I met Grand'mère for the first time when I picked an unripe apple from an overburdened tree. The old woman appeared from the depths of a nearby building and advanced menacingly towards me, hobbling along on a cane,

and pouring forth as she came an unintelligible tirade from which I gathered that the apple reposing guiltily in my hand was hers — not mine. A single *franc* served to wreathe her face in smiles and to obtain undisputed claim to the apple and her good graces in the future. *Ira furor brevis est.* I afterwards learned that houses in Erize rent for fifty *francs* a year, this including several acres of farm land.

Grand-père, aged ninety-eight, I met near the temporary kitchen where the cook was giving him a cup of *Pinard*, which he drank eagerly, while Grand'mère gave him wise counsel, to which he replied as Omar Khayyam might have done.

But they are the only characters of interest here. The fields surrounding the town have as their redeeming feature a system of old trenches, with much barbed wire and an occasional shell-fragment to reward the searcher. The

German advance was stopped less than a mile from here, and the trenches have been used since for practice.

The dugouts interest us particularly. We are later to become surfeited with them, but as yet they are still delightfully novel. The rumble of the guns can be heard plainly from here, and at rare intervals a *saucisse* rises on the horizon, much to our joy and excitement.

THE *saucisse* is a balloon shaped like a sausage — hence its name. At the front they are in the sky by the hundreds on both sides to direct the fire of the artillery and to observe the enemy's operations generally. They are consequently made the objective of the aeroplane, and many are brought down every day. The aeroplane dodges along from cloud to cloud, and when he is just over the *saucisse* suddenly swoops down, and with a tic-tic-tic from his machine-gun

the bag crumples up in a cloud of black smoke and flames, the observer jumps out with his parachute, and the aeroplane dashes off pursued by many shells.

In the balloons the observers all have parachutes and usually make their escape, although often they have to spend a little time dangling from the limb of some tree.

WE are told not to stray far, as the order to move may come at any moment. We take walks through the country, and always on returning find the section with "no news," — but at last the order comes.

We have gotten our baggage ready, and are sitting around in the darkness smoking our pipes and thinking. Tomorrow we are going up to the lines. A big attack has been scheduled, and we are to take care of the wounded. It is to be our first work, and any fighting at all seems a "big attack" to us. We are

A SAUCISSE

a green section, fresh from Paris. We have never heard a shell whistle, and have been thrilled by the sound of guns twenty miles away. What will be our sensations face to face with the real thing? We are a bit nervous. There is some tension. We discuss the probable extent of the attack and debate as to its success. This leads us nowhere, and after we have pledged each other and the section "*Bonne chance*" in a glass of cognac from a bottle opened for the occasion, we turn in.

IT is cold and chill, and a steady drizzle is oozing from the sky above into the earth beneath, and is making it soft and slippery. I awake, yawn, stretch sleepily, and gaze out into the grey dejection of the morning. I have been sleeping luxuriously on the floor of an ambulance, wedged in between two trunks and a duffle-bag.

"Well, this is '*der Tag*' for us," I remark to a friend, who has spent the night on top of the two trunks.

He stops eating my jam for an instant and agrees with me. Then, on second thought, he generously offers me some jam. I sit up and struggle for a few seconds with a piece of the bread we carry for nourishment and defence, spread some jam on it, get out a bottle of Sauterne (at the front wine is wine at all hours of the day and night), and we settle down to breakfast. Breakfast is a purely personal investment, as it officially consists of coffee — so called by courtesy — and bread. The French bread comes in round loaves a foot in diameter, and is never issued until four days old, and is often aged ten or more before we see it. Fresh bread, it is believed, would give a soldier indigestion. French officialdom believes the same evil of water, and provides each soldier with a quart

a day of cheap red wine called, in the *argot* of the trenches, *Pinard*. Breakfast over, we make our way to the barn, our official quarters, by means of stepping-stones previously laid from the car, and chat with the other members of the section.

Today we are moving up into the zone of fire itself, and are somewhat excited. The entire section is to move to a little destroyed town, Ville-sur-Couzances. From there six cars are always to be on duty taking care of our first wounded. The *chef* and the *sous-chef* join us presently. They went up yesterday and were shown the *postes*, and consequently come in for a storm of questions. The *sous-chef* tells us that today we shall hear them "whistle both ways." We are thrilled. He asks us if we are ready. We are — even Rover. Then the lieutenant comes in. He speaks a few words to the *chef*. The *chef* blows his whistle four times.

It is the signal for assembly. He gives us a few instructions. We run to our cars. One whistle — we crank up. Two whistles — the leading ambulance painfully and noisily tears itself from its bed of mud. The others follow in regular succession, until the last car melts into the grey, cold mist. When shall we see Erize again?

II

IN ACTION

VILLE-SUR-COUZANCES is also at this time the headquarters of Section XXIX, which has just lost two men, and Section LXIX, which is a gear-shift section, — we are quite proudly Fords. Section XIX, French, whom we are relieving, examines us critically, but makes no audible comments. To the six of us chosen for the first "roll" there is but one impatient thought. We hear "Napoleon"—a French private attached to our section for *ravitaillement* because he could do nothing else—telling the cook and several unwilling assistants how to dispose of the field range. In the French manner, instead of ignoring him, the stove is discarded, and a Latin argument follows much to the amusement if not to the edification of the onlookers. This

does not concern us, and as soon as we get the order to roll we are blithely off.

It is only a few minutes' run to Brocourt, where the *triage*, or front hospital, is located. This is like a giant hangar in shape, but, instead of the mottled green, blue, and grey *camouflage* of the latter, it is brilliantly white with a red cross fifty feet square surmounting it. Despite this fact, it is bombed and shelled regularly by the "merciful" Hun. We pass through the shattered town, its church tower still standing, by a miracle, and pointing its scarred and violated finger to the heavens with the silent appeal — "Avenge!"

The *sous-chef*, who is sitting beside me, tells me to put on my helmet and to sling my mask over my shoulder. From here on men "go west" suddenly, and in their boots. We pass over a short rise in sight of the German *saucisses*, and down a steep and long hill into Récicourt. Of

that hill there is much to remember — but today it is just steep, and green, and has many trees by the roadside loaded down with much unripe fruit. Past the sentry, over the bridge which the Boche hit yesterday with an eight-inch shell — which failed to explode and bounced into the muddy river — and we are at the relay station. It is a barn with half the roof and a goodly portion of the walls missing. We use this to screen the cars from the eyes of raiding enemy aeroplanes, of which there are many.

Two of us are at once assigned to run to the *poste de secours*, P 2, where just now we are to keep two cars, the other four remaining at the relay station. Again luck is with me, and I am in the first car to roll. Our run is entirely through the woods, in the Hesse Forest, and as the enemy will not be able to see us we rejoice — but we soon learn not to rejoice prematurely. There is hardly a

man in sight as we struggle along through the mud, but beside the road everywhere, often spilling into it, lie piles of shells, 75's, 155's, and *torpilles* by the thousand, apparently arranged haphazardly. The *torpille* is a winged and particularly deadly shell, first cousin to the German *minniewerfer*, and differing essentially only in range. The *maréchal des logis* informs us encouragingly that the one lying in the middle of the road which we just ran over was a Boche which did not explode when it landed, and has not — yet.

Everything is wrapped in the silence of the grave except for an occasional crash as some battery sends its message into Germany. We arrive at P 2, which is distinguished from the rest of the world by a foot square of white cotton and the universal red cross. There is room inside the gate — a log dyke against the mud — to park the cars: "Room sideways or deep," as one member of the

section described it as he watched his boots sink steadily into the mud.

The *sous-chef* calls us around him and gives us our detailed instructions, for he is going back by the first car. Suddenly, as we are listening to him attentively, there is a piercing *zz–chung*, and a 250 lands within a hundred yards with a dull crash and a geyser of trees, dirt, and black smoke. We look at him inquiringly and he points to the *abri*. We nod and adjourn to it. A few more shells follow, then all is peaceful again, while the French batteries around us hammer away at the Germans in their turn. We take lunch on a rustic table under the trees and thoroughly enjoy having our tin plates rattled by the concussion of the guns, while a Frenchman explains to us the difference in sound between an *arrivée* and a *départ*.

Such is the initiation. Then while we, as yet mere amateurs, eat peacefully,

relishing the novelty of the situation, and buoyed up by our first excitement, a short procession passes. It is a group of men carrying stretchers on which are what were men a few minutes before, who, standing within talking distance of us, were blown out of existence by the shells which whistled over our heads and, bursting, scattered *éclats* and dirt on the steel roof that sheltered us. It is a side of the front which has not touched us deeply before, a side which in the first few days of the ordeal by fire impresses itself more and more on the novice, until he learns to temper the realization with philosophy and the so-called humor of the front. Then is the veteran in embryo.

THE ambulance sections are divided into two classes — gear-shift and Ford. The gear-shift sections are composed of Fiats, Berliets, or some other French car. They carry five *couchés* or eight *assis*,

and have two men to a car. The French Army ambulances are all gear-shift, and the gear-shift sections included in the American Field Service all originally belonged to the French Government. Before the American Government took over the Ambulance Corps, the American Field Service, in addition to sending out Ford sections as quickly as they were subscribed in America, had been gradually absorbing the French Ambulance System, relieving with its own men the French drivers who could then serve in the trenches, and including those sections among its own.

The Ford sections carried three *couchés* or four *assis*, and had one driver, although many sections had extra men to help out. A Ford section then, when complete, consisted of twenty ambulances, one Ford *camionnette* or truck, which went for food and carried spare parts and often baggage, one French *camionnette*, a one-ton

truck, which carried tools, French mechanics, and other spare parts, one large White truck with kitchen trailer, one Ford touring-car for the *chef*, and a more or less high-powered touring car for the lieutenant. The personnel was one French lieutenant, who was the connecting link between the organization and the government, and was responsible to the latter for the actions of the section; one *chef*, who was an American chosen by the organization from the *sous-chefs* of one of the sections in the field; one or two *sous-chefs*, chosen by the *chef* from the members of his or some other section; twenty drivers, often an odd number of assistant drivers, an American paid mechanic, and an odd number of French mechanics, cooks, and clerks.

The lieutenant received the orders and was responsible to the army for their execution. The lieutenant gave the *chef* his orders, and the *chef* was responsible

to him for their execution by the section. The *sous-chefs* were the *chef's* assistants.

The routine when at work is for a certain number of cars to be on duty at one time, the number depending on the work. The section is divided into shifts of the number of cars required. When on duty a man must always have his car and himself ready to "roll," and when off duty, after putting his car in condition, must rest so as to be in shape for his next turn. When the work is heavy, the cars on duty are rolling all the time with very little opportunity for food or rest for the driver; consequently, for a man not to get himself and his car ready in this period of rest means that the service is weakened; and that, if other cars go *en panne* unavoidably, it is possibly crippled — and lives may be lost. When the work is light, men are usually twenty-four hours on and forty-eight off; when moderate, twenty-four on and twenty-

four off; when stiff, forty-eight on and twenty-four off, and during an attack almost steadily on. The longest stretch that my section kept its men continuously at work was seven days and nights in the Verdun sector during an attack, and we were compelled to cease then only because too few of our cars were left able to roll to carry the wounded.

From headquarters the day's shift is sent to the relay station, and from there cars go as needed to the *postes de secours*. The *postes* are as near the trenches as it is possible for the cars to go, and some can be visited only at night. The wounded are brought to these by the *brancardiers* through the *boyaux*, or communication trenches, and usually have their first attention here. After first aid has been administered, and when there are enough for a load, or there is a serious case, the car goes to the *triage*, stopping at the relay station, from which a car

is sent to the *poste* to replace the first, which returns to the relay station directly from the hospital.

The hospitals also are divided into two main classes, the *triages*, or front hospitals in the zone of fire, and the H.O.E's, hospitals of evacuation, anywhere back of the lines. The hospital of evacuation is the third of the four stages through which a wounded man passes. The first is the front line dressing station, the *abri;* the second, if the wound is at all serious, is the *triage;* the third, if serious enough, is the hospital of evacuation; and the fourth, if the soldier has been confined to the hospital for ten or more days, is the ten-day *permission* to Paris, Nice, or some other place of his choice. Then these classes, in some cases, are subdivided into separate hospitals for *couchés*, *assis*, and *malades*.

These subdivisions sometimes make complications, as in the case of one

driver who was given what appeared to be a serious case to take to the *couché* hospital. While on the way, however, the serious case revived sufficiently to find his canteen. After a few swallows he felt a pleasant warmth within, for French canteens are not filled with water, and sat up better to observe his surroundings and to make uncomplimentary remarks to the driver. Arrived at the hospital, the *brancardiers* lifted the curtain at the rear of the car, and seeing the patient sitting up and smoking a cigarette, apparently in good health, they refused to take him, and sent the car on to the *assis* hospital. Overcome by his undue exertion, the wounded man lay down again, and by the time the ambulance had reached the other hospital was peacefully dozing on the floor. The *brancardiers* shook their heads, and sent the car back to the *couché* hospital. Somewhat annoyed by this time, the

ambulancier did not drive with the same care, and the jolts aroused the incensed *poilu*, who sat up and began to ask personal questions. The driver, not wishing to continue his trips between the two hospitals for the duration of the war, stopped the car outside the *couché* hospital, and, seeing his patient sitting up, put him definitely to sleep with a tire tool, and sent him in by the uncomplaining *brancardiers*.

WE spend a good part of our time in the *abri*. Just now the Boche appears to have taken a particular dislike to this part of the sector, for he is strafing it most unmercifully. We do not doubt at all that it is because we are here. The fact that there are six thousand French guns massed in the woods, so near together that you cannot walk a dozen feet without tripping over one, may, of course, have something to do with the enemy's

vindictiveness, but that does not occur to us.

After taking an hour or two of interrupted sleep in the *abri*, we step out in the early morning to get a breath of fresh air and to untangle our cramped muscles. A shell or two whines in uncomfortably near, and we are convinced that the enemy knows our every move by instinct. When we sit in the *abri* during the day, and there is never a second that we do not hear the whine of at least one shell overhead, and the intervals between shells striking near enough to shake the *abri* and rattle *éclats* on its steel roof grow less, we are convinced the Boche is searching for *our dugout.* When I am making a run to P 2, and, rounding Dead Horse Corner, start on the last stretch, and a shell knocks a tree across the road a hundred feet ahead, blocking us completely, and two more shells drop on the road by the tree,

two more strike ten yards on our right, and another lands within fifteen feet on our left, there is no doubt in my mind that the enemy is after me.

In reality, of course, the enemy has no idea where the *abris* are located, and just now is simply taking a few chance shots at a likely corner — but every man *knows* that every shell he hears is meant for him personally, — all of which goes to prove how egotistical we really are.

As one man remarked, "Our life out here is just one d— *brancardier* after another." The *brancardiers*, or stretcher-bearers, include the musicians—for the band does not play at the front,—the exchanged prisoners who are pledged to do no combatant work, and others who volunteer for or are assigned to this work. These men are in the front line trenches, where they bandage wounded men as they are hit, and carry them to the front *abri*,

where the *major*, army doctor, gives them more careful attention. At the front *abri* are other *brancardiers*, who then take charge of these men and load them into our cars. We arrive at the hospital, and *brancardiers* there unload the ambulances and carry in the wounded. Inside the hospital other *brancardiers* nurse the wounded, as no women nurses are allowed in the *triage* hospitals.

A callous, hardened, dulled class of men, absolutely lacking in sentiment, yet doing a noble and heroic work. Who could do their work without becoming callous — or insane? We curse them often when they put a man in the car upside down or drop him, but we forget that when the infantry goes *en repos*, the *brancandiers* stay at their posts, going out into No Man's Land every hour to bring in a countryman or an enemy. When, standing by the car at P 3, I see two *brancardiers* carrying a man up from

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BRANCARDIERS LOADING AN AMBULANCE

the *abri* and, after noticing that both his arms are broken, one in two places, that both legs are broken, that a bloody bandage covers his chest, and that the white band around his head is staining red, I see them drop him when a shell screams overhead, I curse them. But I forget that for the past two nights, with their *abri* filled with chlorine gas, these same men have toiled faithfully in suffocating gas-masks, bringing in the wounded, caring for them, and loading them on our cars. I forget that these men have probably not had an hour's consecutive sleep for weeks and that it may be weeks before they have again; that it is months since they last saw a dry foot of ground, or felt that for a moment they were free of the ever present expectation of sudden death. It is something to remember, and it is to wonder rather how they do these things at all than why they seem at times a little careless or a bit tired.

Would the *brancardier* tell you this? When he sees you he asks after your comrades. He takes you in and gives you a cigarette and some *Pinard* in a battered cup, and tries to find you a place to rest, all the time telling you cheerful stories and amusing incidents.

The Staff is the brains of the army; Aviation, the eyes; the Artillery, the voice; the Infantry and Cavalry, the arms; the Engineers, the hands; the Transportation, the legs; the People behind it, the body; but the *Brancardier* is the soul.

THERE are sounds outside of a klaxon being worked vigorously. However, we have several dozing Frenchmen inside the *abri* who are making similar noises, so nothing dawns upon our sleepy senses for some minutes while the owner of the klaxon searches for the *abri*. This is dangerous business, because on all sides are barbed wire, shell-holes, and other

abris. Also, as this one is located in the corner of a graveyard, there is danger that the searcher will wander on and uproot a dozen or more wooden crosses in the search. At last he discovers the right one by falling down the pit we called stairs before the rain set in. A violent monologue arouses us from our dozing comfortlessness, and we learn that a car is wanted at P 2. I am next on call, so I slowly and painfully unwind myself from a support and two pairs of legs, and, with the man who rides with me, make my way into the outer darkness.

We get the car and start off down the road with no lights anywhere, and pray that everything coming the other way keeps to its side of the road and goes slowly. There is always something coming the other way — and your way, a steady succession of *camions* in the centre of the road, and of artillery trains on the side. The *camions* are mostly

very heavy and very powerful, and have no compunction at all about what they run into, as they know that it cannot harm them. The ammunition trains consist of batteries of 75's, little framework teams with *torpilles* fitting in small compartments like eggs, and other such vehicles in tow of a number of mules, with the driver invariably asleep. The traffic, however, in spite of the pitch darkness, would be endurable if it were not for the mud which often comes up to the hubs. It is a slimy mud, and if spread thinly is extremely slippery. On the roads it is rarely spread thinly, and when one gets out to push he often sinks in up to the knee. Then of course there is always the whine of *arrivées* and *départs* passing overhead, and the occasional crump of a German 77 or 150 landing near at hand.

The French and the German gunners play a little game every night with supply

trains and shells. The shells are trumps. The object is to see who can play the more "cards" without being trumped. An artillery train counts one, a *camionnette* two, a *camion* five — because it blocks the road for some time when hit, and gives the enemy time to trump more cards — two ambulances give a win, and if a gun is hit the enemy is disqualified. The game is very interesting — for the artillery.

This modernized blindman's buff is carried on at its best in the early hours of the morning before the game becomes too free-for-all to score carefully, and most of the cars are returned to the "pack" — out of the zone of fire — to wait for the next evening's fun. At this time the roads are crowded, and the game is at its height. As the fun increases for the judges, however, it decreases for the players, — that is to say the "cards." The prospect of being trumped is not a pleasant anticipation, although it keeps

up the interest and prevents *ennui.* After an hour or so of sport the going becomes very bad, as there are always many horses killed, and when the fighting is at all severe there is no time to bury them. Then, too, the narrow gauge railway crossing the road every few rods is often hit, and left, like a steel octopus, with its twisted tentacles stretching out in all directions. These add to the sport hugely, and our chief consolation is to imagine the Boche over on his side having fully as bad if not a worse time than we.

"This or the next?" inquires my companion in reference to a cross-road which appears on our right.

Having no idea I answer, "This one," and we turn. An unaccountable number of jounces greets us as we continue.

"They must have strafed this road a good bit since our last roll," my friend comments.

The going is worse, and we stop to get our bearings. We shout and presently a form rises from the darkness. At any hour of the day or night it is possible to rouse by one or more shouts any number of men anywhere. You can see no one, as the world, for obvious reasons, lives underground in the rabbit burrows of *abris*, but when needed comes forth in force. This is very convenient, as often when driving at night one finds his car stuck in the middle of a new and large shell-hole, and help is necessary. We ask our location.

"*Ah, oui, M'sieu, P-trois!*"

We have come by error to the artillery *poste* and must retrace our way. We exchange cigarettes with the friendly *brancardier* and set off again. At last we get back on the right road, and after making another turn are nearing the *poste*. In the last gleams from a star-shell ahead we see something grey by

the side of the road. As we are in the woods I take a quick look with my flash. It is one of our ambulances. My friend and I look at each other, and are mutually glad that it is too dark to see each other's face. A careful survey of the surroundings yields nothing, and we press on — in silence. We jolt into the *poste* with racing motor and wheels clogged with mud, and go down into the very welcome *abri*. Our friends there know nothing about the ambulance, so we hope for the best.

Friendships at the front are for the most part sincere — but sometimes short.

IT is about ten o'clock in the evening. We have been given a load at P 2 and are returning to the hospital. We turn from the battered Bois d'Avocourt into the Bois de Récicourt, and passing through the Bois de Pommiers roll into the valley. We cross through the town, and when

the sentry lifts the gate pull slowly up the hill towards Brocourt. Punctually at five-thirty this evening twelve shells whistled over Récicourt and struck the hill, but fortunately not the road.

This hill makes a perfect target for the Boche, for if he falls short he hits the town, if he overshoots he will probably hit the hospital, and if he hits what he aims at he may get the road. Consequently there are intermittent bombardments at all hours of the day and night — preferably at night as there is more traffic on the roads. There is one time that the Boche never fails to greet us. That is five-thirty. Every day while I was there, as the hour struck, or would have struck had the clock been left to strike it, twelve shells whistled over Récicourt and knocked fruit from the orchard on the hill. If the Boche were sentimental, we would say it was the early twilight that made him do this,

but as we remember Belgium we call it habit. There are several big *rôtis* set up by the roadside like kilo-stones to remind us that to roll at five-thirty is *verboten.*

For some unexplained and mysterious reason many of the German shells do not explode. Whether this is from faulty workmanship or defective fuses or materials we do not know, but it causes the *poilus* much amusement. There will be the whine of an *arrivée* and a dull thud as it strikes the ground, but no explosion. Every Frenchman present immediately roars with laughter and shouts, "*Rôti! Rôti!*"

We crawl up the hill, the road luckily having escaped injury during the afternoon, and at length reach the hospital. Then, much lightened, we start back. Coasting slowly down the hill we have a perfect opportunity to observe the horizon.

The sky tonight is softly radiant, a velvety black with myriads of brilliant

stars in the upper heavens. Opposite us is another hill, crowned with trees which break gently into the skyline. Above these the sky flashes and sparkles in iridescent glory. The thundering batteries light up everything with brilliant flashes, and the star-shells springing up over No Man's Land hang for an instant high in the air with dazzling brilliancy, and then fading, drift slowly earthward. The artillery signals (Verrey Lights, rockets carrying on their sticks one, two, three, and four lights) dart up everywnere. A raider purrs overhead, and golden bursts of shrapnel crack in the sky. All merge together, first one, then another standing forth to catch the eye for a brief second, the kaleidoscopic brilliancy lifting one up out of the depths of the mire to forget for a moment why these lights flare — treacherous will o' the wisps leading men on to death — and one sees only the wonderful beauty of the scene:

a picture impressed on the memory which makes all seem worth while. One sight of these causes the discomforts and dangers of the day's work to fade, and they become a symbol — a pillar of fire leading on to the victory that is coming when Right shall have conquered Might, and the tortured world can again breathe freely.

IT is night, and the chill mist has settled close to the ground. It is cold and damp, but the front is always cold and damp so no one comments on it. We are several feet underground and that augments the chill somewhat, but as here one lives underground he does not think of that. There is a little breeze outside, for the burlap that hangs at the foot of the stairs leading to the outer world quivers, and the lone candle flickers uncertainly, casting weird shadows from the black steel roof on the sleeping forms. The sides of the

abri are lined with bunks, wooden frames covered with wire netting, upon which lie sprawled *brancardiers*, *poilus*, and in one an American has managed to locate himself quite comfortably. The *abri* is short, and the few bunks are at a premium.

Two of our men are asleep, — one on the floor, another in a bunk. The rest of us wrap our coats around us and smoke pensively. We think of home, and wonder what our friends there are doing just now. It is August and slightly after midnight. The time difference makes it a few minutes past six in the States. At the seashore they are coming in from canoeing and swimming, sitting around before dinner, discussing the plans for the evening and the happenings of the day. At the mountains they are finishing rounds of golf or sets of tennis, and the pink and gold of the sunset is crowning the peaks with a fading burst of glory. Soon the lights of the hotel will shine brightly

forth into the gathering gloom, and the dance music will strike up.

Each tells the others just what he would be doing at the moment were he in the States, and comments. It is all done in an absolutely detached manner, just as one describes incidents and chapters in books. We think we would like to be home now, but we know that we would rather not. We are perfectly contented to be doing what we are doing, and do not envy those at home. Nor do we begrudge any of them the pleasant times they may be having. In fact, if we thought they were giving them up we would be miserable. One cannot think about this war for long at a time, and when one meditates it is to speculate on what is happening at home. One gloats over imaginary dances, theatres, and all varieties of good times. I have often enjoyed monologue discussions with my friends, or imagined myself doing any

one of the many things I might have been doing. It is the lonesome man's chief standby to live by proxy.

Outside there is continually the dull thunder of the guns. They are evidently firing *tir de barrage*, for there is a certain regularity in the wave of sound that rumbles in on us. Perhaps the barrage is falling on the roads behind the enemy lines, cutting off and destroying his supply trains. Perhaps it is trying to sweep some of his batteries out of existence, or perhaps it is falling on his trenches, taking its toll of nerve and life. Again we can only conjecture. There is the continual whine of his shells rushing overhead, and the *crump-crump* of their breaking in the near distance. Then the enemy starts a little sweeping of his own, and the *arrivées* begin to fall in an arc which draws steadily nearer, until a thunder clap just outside and the rattling of *éclats*, dirt, and tree fragments on the

roof, make you rejoice in your cover, and you chuckle as a *brancardier* sleepily remarks, "*Entrez!*" You wonder curiously, and listen expectantly to see if the next will fall on you; then you doze again or say something to the man beside you.

Inside there is an equal variety of sounds. There are *poilus* snoring in seven different octaves, there is the splutter of the candle overhead, and from one corner an occasional moan from some wounded man, growing more frequent as the night wears on. We may not take him in until we have enough for a load. Soon there is the sound of feet on the stairs, and a *brancardier* stumbles in leading a man raving wildly, with his head swathed in fresh bandages rapidly staining with the oozing blood. Some one moves, and he is seated and given a cup of *Pinard* and a cigarette, which he accepts gratefully. We get ready to

go out to the ambulance, but the doctor shakes his head — we have not a load yet. Some of the regulations perplex us; but it is not our business, so we light up our pipes again and snuggle down into our fur coats, dozing and listening to the whine of the shells outside and the moans inside. Then, after a while, another *blessé* is brought to the door and the doctor nods. Two of us jump up, snatch our *musettes*, run to the car, and assist the *brancardiers* in shoving in the third man, who is unconscious. Then we crank up, and after some minutes of manœuvring in the deep mud reach the road and start for the hospital.

THE black of the night, split by the star-shells and the batteries, has given place to the grey of the dawn. All is still and quiet, with the rare crash of a battery or an *arrivée* alone breaking the silence. There is no sign of the sun, and

it will be some hours before it breaks through the early mist to smile upon us for a few brief moments before the never-ending rain envelops us again, — for it is the *mauvais temps*.

After lying for two hours in one of the bunks in the *abri*, and vainly endeavoring to keep warm with two *blessé* blankets, I arise stiffly and crawl out into the fresh air. The *blessé* blankets are single blankets quartered and, as they are assigned for use in the ambulances and *abris* for the wounded, often bring little visitors.

The air is clear and damp, and remarkably invigorating. A few deep breaths start the blood slowly moving through my veins, and I walk around in the mud, stretching my cramped limbs. There are the usual new shell-holes scattered about to make us first rejoice in our shelter and then look doubtfully at the all-too-thin layer of dirt on the roof between us and a direct hit. The

AN ABRI

Germans, when they take up a position, seem to think of it as permanent, dig their *abris* often as deep as a hundred feet underground, and are absolutely safe in them except when a raiding party tosses a grenade down the stairs. Their officers' quarters are particularly spacious, lined with cement, with the walls often papered, holding brass beds and other quite civilized comforts. A piano was found in one. It had been put in before the cement was laid, and they were unable to remove it when they retreated — even if they had had the time. The French, whether from laziness or because they expect soon again to be moving forward, waste little time on the dug-outs. The standard is a pit lined with sandbags, and covered by a conventional form of corrugated steel roof, with more sandbags and a little dirt on top of this. These protect from the *éclats*, or shell fragments, but form a death trap for all inside if there is a direct

hit. If the side of a hill or a hollow is available it affords more protection. The one direct hit on our *abri* at P 2 was luckily a "dud," and caused no damage.

I walk over to the pile of discarded equipment to see if anything interesting has been added during the night. This and the hospital are the two favorite places for souvenir hunters. At all the *postes* and in the hospitals the rifles, bayonets, packs, belts, cartridges, knives, grenades, revolvers, shoes, and other equipment of the wounded and dead are put in a large pile, and the first to recover get the pick — after our selection. At the *postes* these things are piled in the open, with no protection from the elements, and many are slowly disintegrating. This morning, of the new things there is of interest only one of the large wire-clippers, used by the *pionniers* and scouts for passing through the enemy wire. But my friend has seen them first,

so I waive all claims, and he tucks them carefully away in one of the several side-boxes with which the cars are equipped.

The trees are twice decimated, but the birds have stayed, and now they are waking and, overflowing with high spirits, sing their message of good cheer. They answer each other from different parts of the wood, and by closing one's eyes one seems to be in the country at home. Never has the song of birds seemed more beautiful or more welcome, and, gladdened, we listen while we may, before the slowly swelling thunder of the guns, beginning their early morning bombardment, drowns out all other sound. We go down again into the *abri* and pray for a load soon to take us down to the hospital and breakfast at headquarters.

WE have been ordered *en repos*, and after turning in our extra gas masks —

we carry ten in the car for the wounded in addition to the two on our person — our *blessé* blankets, and stretchers, we start in to load the cars with our friends, and our own baggage. As for some time our baggage has been lying *en masse* in the "drawing-room" of Tucker Inn, as some humorous *conducteur* styled the roofless pen in Récicourt, where our belongings were left while we were rolling, or in the surrounding *abris*, one could not be at all certain that he was putting the right things in the right duffles, and it was not surprising if a stray jar or two of *confiture* most unaccountably found its way into one's own duffle.

The section in formation, we roll off with the sun shining brightly on grimy cars and drivers, down the roads, passing ruin after ruin, with a burst of speed past a corner in view of the German trenches, and we again begin to see familiar ground. The green hill back of

Erize, with shadows of the woods and the scars of the old trenches, appears in the distance, and my friend looks at me and chuckles.

Back in the same little town, parked in the same ruins with the same quietness, peace, and relaxation from the tenseness of the past days, which is so welcome this time, my friend and I walk into a little *estaminet*, pledge each other in glasses of French beer, and taking off our helmets for almost the first time in what seems an age, survey them and each other in placid contentment.

III

EN REPOS

A BATCH of mail was given out the morning after our return. When we moved, our address seemed to have been lost, for only a few letters, of no interest to any one, managed to find us. We have been too busy to miss them, and when they arrived in a bunch there were no complaints.

It is a wonderful thrill to get a letter from home, to read what those who mean all to one are doing, and to feel their personalities throbbing "between the lines." We bridge for a brief moment the chasm of three thousand miles, and in revery gaze upon those persons, those places, and those things we have known. Our thoughts here are always in the past. We cannot think of the present, and we dare not think of the future, but there is always the past to live in, — the past of events and memories.

We settle down to the same dull monotony as before. For a few days this is bliss, but it soon becomes tiring again. All work here is contrast. When we are at work, we work intensively, taking less rest than seems physically possible, and when *en repos* we are plunged into the dullest monotony imaginable, with nothing to amuse or occupy us. This is true of every branch of active service.

The few air raids are rather an anti-climax after the days that have just passed, especially as nothing falls near enough to cause us any annoyance. At Bar-le-Duc the Boche playfully drops a dozen bombs into the German prison camp, much to every one's amusement; a mile from us he destroys a camp of Bulgarian prisoners, and we wonder at his hard-headedness and laugh. But the next night we hear bombs crashing in the distance, and in the morning learn from

some men in another section passing through that it was Vadlaincourt, where the Huns flew so near the ground that soldiers in the streets shot at them with rifles. At that height the aeroplanes could not mistake their targets, and they retired only when the hospital was a mass of flaming ruins. There are no smiles at this. Another night the purring motors reveal outlined high against the stars a fleet of Zeppelins, bound we know not where, but, we do know, on a mission of death to the innocent.

THE enemy aeroplane comes over us often. We have wondered why, but we now realize that while the Allies can get control of the air when they want it, to keep continual control would be too expensive in both men and machines. The anti-aircraft gun theoretically solves the problem. When an enemy machine appears, a battery of *contre-avions* is

notified and essays the destruction of the adventurer.

It is pretty sport. A little white machine, sometimes catching the glint of the sun, dashes towards us at a great height. It is sighted, and then the high-pitched boom-booms of the *contre-avions* start in, and the shrapnel breaks at varying distances around the machine like powder-puffs, which float along for some minutes. After a little of this harmless sport the Boche gets out of range, the guns cease, and the machine, having in the meanwhile disposed of some bombs or taken some photographs, dashes off, to be followed shortly by one or two Frenchmen.

The practical value of the anti-aircraft guns is to keep the machines so high in the air that they can accomplish little, as the guns rarely score. At M——, where every day they have been shooting two or three hundred rounds at the machines

which fly over the city, they are quite proud of their record, for once in one day they shot down three machines — two of their own and one German. They have been resting on their laurels ever since. It was a few examples like this which taught the French airmen to keep out of the sky while the *contre-avions* were busy.

"NAPOLEON" was so christened by us because, despite his sparrow-like form and manner, he considers himself the moving spirit of the army in general and of our section in particular. Because he knows nothing about automobiles, he styles himself an expert, — the mere fact that he is assigned as clerk to an ambulance section proves his claim. The one time he had the indiscretion to touch a car, he drove the lieutenant's around the compound with the emergency brake set — after telling the *sous-chef* that he

had driven cars for twenty years! One of the ambulances goes for *ravitaillement* every day, carrying "Napoleon," who disappears into mysterious buildings and returns with still more mysterious edibles, presumably for our delectation.

On one trip the carburetor gave trouble and we stopped and cleaned it. While we were working we noticed "Napoleon" industriously turning the lights on and off, pumping the button on the dash. We said nothing, and when we had finished and started the car again he tapped his chest proudly, cocked his head, and said, "*Moi!*"

In circumnavigating a large team in the centre of the road later that day I rubbed "Napoleon" off against a horse, and after that he snubbed me on every occasion.

BEING at the cross-roads, all manner of men and things come through Erize.

The never-ending stream of *camions* passing each other as they go, layers deep with dust and grime, winds on steadily. There is great rivalry between the *camion pelotons*, and each has adopted an insignia painted on the sides of the cars to distinguish it from the others. As there are several hundred *pelotons* the designs are many, interesting, and reveal much of the inner nature of the *poilu*. Every species of beast and fowl is depicted, — greyhound, stork, swallow, and other types, — as a monkey riding on a shell, a demon with trident pursuing a German, and then perhaps a child's face, copied no doubt from the locket of one of the men.

Soldiers go up cheering wildly, singing and shouting. They return silent, tired, covered with mud, and reduced in numbers. German rifles, bayonets, caps, buttons, cartridges, and other odds and ends are then offered for sale. In August

a *poilu* offered me a German rifle. I was examining it, and admiring the design, when I noticed the maker's name, — the latest type German rifle had been made in New Jersey, U.S.A.

In addition to these things, the *poilus* have for sale many articles they have made themselves. The favorite is the *briquet*, or pocket lighter. This is made in all conceivable sizes and shapes, and operates by a flint and steel lighting a gasoline wick. This is why we use more gasoline *en repos* than when rolling! The soldiers also take the *soixante-quinze* shell-cases and carve and hammer them into vases. As many of the men were experts at work of this type "*avant la guerre*," and as much local talent has appeared since, some of the specimens are very fine indeed, and command high prices in the cities.

It is these laughing, playing, seemingly care-free soldiers who are the spirit of the

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A DIVISION EN REPOS

war. Relieved from the tense struggle of life and death for a brief rest, their joyous nature blossoms forth in reaction from the serious affairs of their day's work.

THERE is nothing that so brings out the best in a man as to fight against terrific odds, to struggle in a losing fight with the knowledge that only by superhuman effort can the odds be equaled or turned. To work for an ideal is a wonderfully inspiring thing, but when the battle necessitates the risking or the sacrificing of home, happiness, and life it brings to the surface in those who persevere characteristics which lie dormant or concealed.

An ideal must be worth while when millions of men gladly risk their all for its attainment, and those men who risk and sacrifice must have returned to them something for what they give. Whatever sort of creature he is on the surface, the fire test, if a man passes it and is not

shrivelled in its all-consuming flame, must develop in him certain latent and hitherto buried attributes which are fit to greet the light of day. If he be lacking in worthy human instincts, the flame will destroy him, but if he passes through the test, he emerges a better man—how much better depends on the individual. At least, having once seen the ideal, he has something now for which to live and strive.

THE world, judging from what it saw on the surface, flatly declared that France could never stand up under the strain; but what has happened has proved how little of the real worth of a nation or of a man is ever visible on the surface. There must always come the test, the fire which burns off the mask, the false surface beneath which mankind ever hides, and brings forth what is concealed —good or bad. The bad is swept away and the good survives.

The French are a temperamental people, and consequently are most easily affected by circumstances. In former times the mass of the people were inclined to be demonstrative, insincere, somewhat selfish, and rather egotistical. These characteristics could never pass the tests, and now the true spirit of France, the Phœnix, is rising from the ashes of the past a freed and glorified being, radiant in the joy of accomplishment. From the torture she has endured, an understanding of the feelings and desires of others must be born which will banish the taint of selfishness forever. Those who do things are never egotistical — they have no time to talk, and France has been doing things these past years. Those who rub elbows with the elementals and sacrifice for each other and a cause can never be insincere again. And what harm is there in demonstration? The bad characteristics removed, this becomes merely an

effervescence, a bubbling over of a joyous, unrestrained nature — Ponce de Leon's true fountain of perpetual youth.

The difference between the men who have served at the front and either seen or felt great suffering, and those who have not, is most marked. One evening I was in an *abri* where some new recruits were wrangling over unimportant things, and showing their selfish character in every speech and act, when a desperately wounded man was brought in. After serving for some time in the trenches he had been given a few days' leave to see his family. He went back happily, thinking of the wife and the little children he was soon to see again. Having left the third-line trenches, he was walking through the woods down the *boyau* which leads to the outer world, when a shell broke overhead. The *brancardiers* patched him up and brought him in with his head bound so that his eyes and

mouth alone were visible. The doctor handed him a cup of *Pinard* and a cigarette, neither of which would he touch until he had offered it to the rest of us. I picked up his helmet which he had put down for an instant, although his eye never left it. There was a hole in it through which I could have rolled a golf ball.

To illustrate the reverse — I was standing in a town a little ways back, waiting for a car to give me a lift up to the lines, when a kitten rubbed against my leg. I picked it up and started to play with it. Instantly a peasant — not too old to serve — rushed out and snatched the kitten from my arms:

"*Ce n'est pas à vous!*" was his comment.

THE English can never be called a temperamental race, but even their stolid worth has needed much shaking up for the best in it to come to the surface.

The example they have set since their awakening is one which any nation may well emulate, and it will be a proud people indeed which can ever equal the record they have made in this war for courage and devotion, never surpassed in the history of the world.

The *poilu* and the Tommy are of such opposite types that each completely mystifies the other. The Frenchman works himself up to a fanatical state of enthusiasm, and in a wild burst of excitement dashes into the fray. The Englishman finishes his cigarette, exchanges a joke with his "bunkie," and coolly goes "over the top." Both are wonderful fighters, with the profoundest admiration for each other, but each with an absolute lack of understanding of the other, intensified by the difference in language.

THE varying characteristics of troops from different parts of the world — the allied countries, dependencies, and colonies — have led to their classification and assignment to the work best adapted to their temperament. The fighting troops are divided into two main classes called the "flying" and the "holding" divisions. There are some troops who are wonderful in a charge, but have no stamina or staying power to resist counter-attacks or the wear of steady fighting. There are others who lack the initiative and dash, but who can hold on and resist anything. Then there are others who, while they are possessed of both qualities, are somewhat better suited for one class than the other. The Flying Divisions are used chiefly in the attacks, where a quick advance and desperate fighting must win the day. This completed, they go back *en repos* again, while the Holding

Divisions take their place to consolidate the ground won, and to resist the enemy's attempts to regain it. The Flying Divisions have longer *repos* but more violent fighting while they are on the line, and the Holding Divisions have shorter *repos* but a less strenuous although longer stretch in the trenches. This has all been worked out from observation and experiment.

For example, — in the early days of the war the Madagascans, French colored colonial troops, are given certain trenches to take. They take them with little delay, and are told to consolidate and hold them. This is all very well until supper fails to arrive. The soldiers wait impatiently for a short while, and then, ignoring the commands of their officers, evacuate their trenches, which are immediately occupied by the Germans, and go back for their meal. Supper finished, with no hesitation they return and in a wild

charge recapture their trenches and several more.

Other French troops in the Flying Division are the Algerians, who have done wonderful fighting throughout the war, and have suffered heavily. It is the boast of the Foreign Legion, which is classed as Algerian, that since its organization it has never failed to reach its objective, and even in this war it has made good its boast. In one attack the Legion entered thirty-five thousand strong and returned victorious with a remnant of thirty-five hundred men.

The Algerians have a sense of humor all their own. An *ambulancier* was carrying one of them down to the hospital. As he was only slightly wounded he was sitting on the front seat with the driver, leaving more room for the *couchés* inside. One of the *couchés* was a German. Half way to the *triage* the Algerian made signs to the driver to stop. The driver

looked inquiringly at the man who, with a broad grin, pulled out a long knife and pointed at the German. The driver naturally did not humor him, and the sulky Zouave refused to speak to him during the rest of the trip.

Another Algerian came into the *poste* one day. He had a great joke that he wanted us all to hear. He said that he had been given three prisoners to bring in, and was leading them down a road in a pouring rain, when he noticed the ruin of a house with the roof missing. He told the prisoners to go in there — "where it would be drier," and when they complied, stood on the outside and tossed grenades over the wall at them.

The fact that the colonial troops of the Allies, especially those of Great Britain — the Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders — fall practically without exception into the Flying Division because of the initiative, dash, and daring

developed in them to such a degree, has given Germany, who has won more victories with poisoned pen than with the sword, an opportunity to stir up hard feeling with her propaganda between the colonies and their mother country.

This propaganda claims that England has sacrificed her Colonials to save her own troops. Nothing could be farther from the truth. While the Colonials are in the Flying Division and the larger part of the English in the Holding Division, because of their famous bulldog tenacity, the English have lost a greater percentage of their men than any one of the colonies. The world has never seen such fighting as the troops of Great Britain have had to stand up under, and full credit is always given the Colonials for their share.

The Canadians particularly have distinguished themselves. They share with the Foreign Legion alone the distinction

of never having been given an objective they have not taken. When the order came for the attack on Vimy Ridge it read: *The Canadians will take Vimy Ridge at such and such an hour*, and they took it on the dot. With the Canadians must be put the Anzacs, — Australians and New Zealanders, — examples of what universal military training can do.

Then there are the Indians, who never take a prisoner. By training and tradition they are great head-hunters, and enjoy nothing better than creeping out at night over No Man's Land and waiting before the enemy's trench until a sentry puts up his head to observe. A quick sweep of the curved knife, the head is secured, and the Indian returns with the feeling of "something accomplished, something done, has earned a night's repose." Their sense of humor has much in common with that of the Algerians — and of the Germans.

Many of the heads, in all stages of curing, have been found in the knapsacks and equipments of these troops — when they were dead or unconscious. While conscious, the Indian will guard them with his life, feeling that they are legitimate souvenirs.

THERE are three French medals which are given for service in this war, not to mention a number of lesser ones which are seen rarely. The most coveted of these is the Legion of Honour, a medal famous for some centuries both in war and peace. This is divided into several classes. There is the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, a very large medal worn over the right-hand pocket with no ribbon. This has been awarded to a few men of the greatness of Joffre and Petain. Then there is the grade of Commander of the Legion of Honour. This is a smaller cross worn at the neck. There are also

the ranks of Officer and Chevalier. Both are small crosses on red ribbons, but the former has a rosette on the ribbon to distinguish it. These are awarded to officers only and are greatly prized.

Two new medals were struck for the war, — the *Médaille Militaire* and the *Croix de Guerre*. The *Médaille* is a round medal on a yellow ribbon of one class only, and is awarded to officers and soldiers alike for actual bravery on the field. The *Croix de Guerre* is a bronze cross on a green and red ribbon, and has three classes, — the *Croix de Guerre d'Armée*, which has a bronze palm on the ribbon, *de Corps d'Armée*, which has a bronze star on the ribbon, and *de Division*, which has a plain ribbon. They are awarded for different degrees of bravery or service to officers and soldiers alike, and may be won unlimited times. In aviation a *Croix* with palm is given to an aviator for every enemy plane he is

officially credited with downing. Thus Gynemer at the time of his death was privileged to wear fifty-five palms on his ribbon. For the benefit of such as he a silver palm is worn, representing five bronze, and a gold palm in place of ten bronze. Before this was allowed, Gynemer wore his ribbon with forty odd palms.

In addition to these there are the colonial medals and a number of French decorations which have not strictly to do with the war.

TONIGHT I am on guard. I have just taken a walk around the cars. It is the hour before the dawn, and the cold, grey mist hangs over all, robing the jagged ruins and harmonizing the rough outlines into something more human, while accentuating the stare of the vacant window-openings. There is the first crescent of the moon in the sky. Two

companies of artillery have just passed along the road. The guns and caissons creak and rumble, and the men, preserving a sleepy silence, bend forward on their horses, their heavy sabres smacking against the horses' sides, and their blue uniforms melting into the mist.

The officer halts to water his horse, and we chat for a minute. The *contre-avions* are after a raider headed for Bar-le-Duc, and I put out my lantern. We smile as the shrapnel bursts more than a mile from the machine. The officer speaks a few words of praise about his men, then vaults on his horse. We exchange "*bonne chance*," and he canters off down the road, disappearing in the blue-grey mist.

A RUMOR creeps into camp that the next attack will be at V——. More rumors follow, supported by the increased traffic. We are on the main road to

V——, and are keenly critical. We take out our maps and examine the outline of the front in the sector just as if we knew something about it. Would-be strategists hold forth in heated arguments, and many bitter debates follow. Those of us who have the early watch just at daybreak notice many companies of *soixante-quinzes* rumbling by each morning, and observe that they take the left fork of the road. This is important, for the left road leads towards M——, which is really not in our sector. More argument follows, and ears are constantly strained to catch the first augmentation of the distant thunder of the guns, and to determine from which end of the sector it comes.

Now all the officers admit that an attack is to ensue shortly, but they do not know when. We tune up our cars and get our baggage ready, as we may be called. The lieutenant receives some

orders and warns us to be ready to move on a moment's notice.

The traffic is incessant now. *Camions* with shells, barbed wire, *camouflage* cloth, *torpilles*, and more shells rush by. Convoys pass filled with troops, cheering wildly, thirty-five hundred or more in an evening. The thunder is gradually intensified, and the sky flashes faintly in the distance like heat lightning. From a hilltop artillery rockets and star-shells can be seen in the far horizon. More troops keep going up, and the guns pound the line with unabated fury.

It is evening, and we are formed in a circle listening to some story. The lieutenant walks up to us:

"We move at seven in the morning," he says laconically, and steps off.

IV

AT THE FRONT

THIS time we have a different run. It is from Montzéville to Hill 239, and the wounded are brought in through the communication trench which leads to Mort Homme — the well-named Dead Man's Hill. The road was once lined for a distance of perhaps a mile with towering poplars, evinced by the size of the stumps, but now not one of them is left higher than three or four feet. The road runs the entire distance across open meadows, and as what *camouflage* there was has been shot away by the Boche in his search for two 220 batteries, which have long since moved on, the enemy *saucisses* can regulate the traffic quite simply. The place has been shot up so much recently that there has been no time to repair the roads fully, and now there are long stretches temporarily

patched with rough, broken stone, which makes bad going. Riding forward, one sees large German shells breaking on the road ahead like sudden black clouds, which disappear slowly and convey to the mind uncomfortable premonitions.

Mort Homme comes suddenly and bleakly into view about two kilometres on our left, — a hill, not exceedingly high, commanding a great plain, it is imposing only in the memory of the rivers of blood that have flowed down its sides. Once — and looking at it one can scarcely believe it — this was covered with trees and vegetation like many another less famous hill. Now it is reduced to a mere sandpile, pitted with the scars of a million shells. After standing the continuous bombardment of both combatants for over a year, there is left not a stick of vegetation, nor an inch of ground that has not been turned over by shells many times. Crowned by the pink of

the sunset, it stands there on the plain a great monument to the glorious death of thousands.

The French lost many thousands of lives in their attempts to capture Mort Homme, and were very bitter, consequently, against its defenders. There was a large tunnel running through the hill, and when three sides had been captured and both ends of the tunnel were held, it was discovered that they had trapped there three thousand Germans. I talked with a man who walked through the tunnel the day after the massacre and he told me that it was literally inches deep in blood.

Arrived at the *poste*, which is nothing more than a hole in the ground, we stand around while the *brancardiers* load the car and exchange lies with any one who happens to be there. The Boche sends a dozen or more shells whining over our heads to break on the road or beside it,

and near enough for every one to gravitate slowly towards the *abri* in preparation for a wild dive should the next shell fall much nearer. One man asked me why they put stairs leading into an *abri*, as nobody ever thought of using them. When I asked him how else one would get out, he said he had never thought of that.

There is nothing quite so uncomfortable to hear as the near whistle of a shell. The more one hears the sound the more it affects him. There is something in the sharp whine which seems to create despair and induce subconscious melancholy. There is a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness that is most depressing. The thunder of the guns or the crash of the bursting shells cannot be compared with the sound of this approaching menace. It is as if some demon from the depths of Hades were hurtling towards you, its weird laughter crying

out, calling to you and chilling your blood. For the second of its passage a hush falls on the conversation, and the best jokes die in dry throats. But it is only for that second, and instantly laughter rings out again at some jest. Speculations or comments are made on the probable or observed place where it exploded, and all is the same except for that subconscious tenseness which, for the most part unrealized, grips every man while he goes about his work here.

The first ordeal by fire is the easiest. It is then but a new and interesting sensation and experience. Later, after one has seen the effect and had some close calls, it is more of a nervous strain. The whine of a shell is very high-pitched, and after a time the sound wears distinctly on the nerves. It is a curious fact that, in spite of the philosophy developed, the longer a man has been under shell-fire the harder it is for him to stand it. By no means

would he think of showing it, but he would not deny the fact. It is only the philosophy and callousness developed which keep the men from breaking down, and in many cases the strain on the nerves becomes so great that men do collapse under it. This is one of the forms of so-called "shell-shock."

The car loaded with *blessés*, we start back, driving more slowly this time, as precious lives are in our care and jolts must be avoided wherever possible. We find the road still more "out of repair" than when we went over it before, with a number of new shell-holes varying from two to ten feet in diameter, and much wood, dirt, and torn *camouflage* strewn about, and often a horse lying where it was hit, its blood coloring the mud in the gutter.

Approaching the town of Montzéville one sees at first a wood — *ci-devant* — now a few blackened tree-trunks of spectre-like

appearance against the grey of the evening sky. Behind these appears the town, a mass of jagged ruins, at that distance seeming to be absolutely deserted. In fact it is, except for the dozen odd men who live in two or three scattered *abris* for some obscure purpose. An air of desolation and despair broods over the place, and God knows it has seen enough to haunt it.

From Montzéville we ride on to Dombasle and Jouy, the hospital, and after handing over our more or less helpless charges to the tender mercies of the *brancardiers*, we return to the relay-station at Montzéville to wait for our next roll, and to wonder what possible good those *poilus* can be doing who sit all day so peacefully at the door of the *abri* opposite ours, sipping *Pinard* and smoking their cigarettes.

THE soldiers at the front are always looking for the bright side of life, and after a little one gets to see humor in many more things than he would have believed possible at home. As an example, there seems to be little humor connected with a funeral, yet one of the times I saw the *poilus* most amused was one day at P 4, our relay-station, on such an occasion.

There had been an intermittent bombardment, and we were sitting or standing inside the *abri* waiting for it to let up. The *abri* was located in the corner of a graveyard, and there was always the unpleasant feeling that the next rain might wash a few bones in on us. The *abri* was small, very crowded, and, as it was several feet underground, none too well ventilated. Every one spent long stretches here, and brought his food with him. What was too poor to eat

soon mixed with the mud on the floor, lending an unsavory odor to the atmosphere. Presently one of the Frenchmen went out to see if the bombardment had stopped. This is discovered by the same method one ascertains whether or not it is raining — if he gets wet the storm is not over. The bombardment was not over, and we waited. At last it seemed to have let up, only an occasional shell crashing into the woods across the road, and we went out to stretch and get a breath of air.

The *poilus* gathered our inquisitive friend from the surrounding shrubbery and trees and put him into several empty sandbags which they laid on a stretcher, carefully placing the head, which appeared to have been solid enough to withstand the shock, at the upper end. Another man carried a freshly-made pine-wood coffin. In high spirits, the assembled soldiers formed a procession and marched

into the graveyard, singing alternately a funeral dirge and "Madelon," the French "Tipperary." This graveyard, not being on the firing-line itself, was rather a formal affair. The graves were laid out in neat rows, and each man had one all to himself with a wooden cross and his name on it. Of course occasionally the shells did a little mixing, but that was a jest of the Fates which disturbed no one, least of all those who were mixed.

Arrived at the grave, the *poilus* rolled in the fragments of our late friend and covered them with dirt.

"*Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note.*"

Then they came back, roaring with laughter and tossing the coffin in the air. The hero had expected the coffin and they had fooled him. Now they could use it again.

The usual method of burial on the French front, where there is little time to attend to such matters, is to dig a ditch six feet wide, ten feet deep, and twenty feet long approximately. As each man is killed, time and circumstances permitting, he is divested of his coat and shoes, and his pockets are emptied. He is then thrown into the ditch and covered with a few shovelfuls of dirt. This system is all very well until new divisions relieve those in the trenches, and start digging ditches for their own men. As there are no marks to show the location of the old ones, they sometimes uncover rather unpleasant sights.

The reputation we have gained at home of being cold-blooded and lacking in the finer senses is undeserved. While one is in it he cannot permit himself to realize or dwell on the horrors or they would overwhelm him and drive him insane. What is more natural than for the reac-

tion to turn the matter into jest and joke, to permit it to glance from the surface without inflicting a wound? — "*C'est la guerre.*"

PLUNGED suddenly from the commonplaces of peace into the seething cauldron of war, France has had to adjust herself. Every one without exception has lost many who were dear to him and much that he had considered essential. The homes and hopes of thousands have been blasted. Destruction, following in the wake of the invaders, has laid waste much of the land, in many cases irreparably.

Entering the war a man is possessed of the greatest seriousness. He thinks of its causes, the results both immediate and future, and of the effect of each on him. He is stunned by what he believes himself to be bearing up under. Then, as he moves up into the zone, into service and

action, and sees how others are affected, how much suffering and misfortune come to them, he merges his troubles with theirs, realizing the pettiness and insignificance of his own in the *tout ensemble.* He laughs, and from this laugh springs the philosophy, — "*C'est la guerre.*"

If a fly falls in his soup, if his best friend is blown to bits before him, if his home and village are destroyed, he calmly shrugs his shoulders, and remarks, "*C'est la guerre.*"

THE roads at the front are cared for by a class of unsung heroes, the road-builders. Back of the lines German prisoners are often used for this work, but it is a rule of warfare that prisoners must not be worked under fire, and the Allies observe this as the other rules of civilized warfare. The roads are the arteries of the front, and during an attack the enemy does his best to cripple them. If

he succeeds, the troops in the trenches, cut off from food, ammunition, and other supplies, are at his mercy. During one attack through which I worked, the Boche, whose hobby is getting ranges down to the inch and applying them as all other things in a definite system, put a 150 every ten yards down the more important roads.

All work in the zone is done by three classes of workers, excluding the necessary military operations carried on by the troops in action. First, there are the German prisoners who do every kind of work out of the zone of fire. Then there are the French prisoners in the army, who have committed some military crime, from sneezing in ranks to shooting a colonel. Instead of serving time in a guardhouse, these are put in the front-line trenches and kept there unarmed to build up the parapet, attend to the drains, stop Boche bullets, and perform other func-

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NORMAL TRAFFIC AT THE FRONT

tions. If, for instance, a French soldier sends a letter through the civil instead of the military mails, where the censorship is more strict, he receives a thirty days' sentence. If these prisoners make a suspicious move they are shot by their own men. Second timers are rare, but many serve life sentences.

Then there is the third class, a regular branch of the army, a subdivision of the engineers, termed *pionniers*. The engineers do the nastiest work in the army, and the *pionniers* do the nastiest work in the engineers. It is their duty to see that the wire is properly cut before a charge, that the parapet is in repair and does not lack sandbags, — and it is in this class that the roadbuilders come.

All along the roads lie piles of broken stone, which are continually replaced by loads from the rear. At intervals are placed *abris* filled with roadbuilders who watch until a shell hits the road in their

sector. Then, almost before the dirt settles, they rush out armed with shovels, and pile this rough stone into the hole and rush back again to shelter, to wait for the next shell, which is not long in coming. This rough patching is consolidated later when the sector quiets down, but does admirably for the time-being, as the mud and traffic push it rapidly into shape.

Steam-rollers are then sent up to finish the work, but find themselves *persona non grata* when left over night in the middle of a narrow and muddy road, with no lights showing. We *ambulanciers* are not fond of the species at any time, as they seem to have a great affinity for six-inch shells. When disintegrated, any one of the numerous parts blocks our way. We are perfectly content to have the task left to the simple roadbuilder, who proves less of an obstruction after meeting a one-fifty.

MANY undeveloped instincts lie dormant in the subconscious mind of man. In this war, where man has turned back the pages of civilization to live and act for a period of time as a glorified cave-dweller, a number of these unknown faculties have been discovered and developed.

Many animals have the power of seeing in the dark, and all species can sense an unknown danger. These senses have been denied to civilized man, but the primitive life at the front has developed them and other instincts in those who live there so that it seems as if man might again become possessed of all his latent powers.

A man going along a road has a conviction that if he continues he will be killed. He makes a wide detour to avoid the road, and a shell strikes where he would have been. Then again, men have premonitions that they will be killed in

the next attack or battle. All this is coupled with absolute fatalism. They feel either that they are going to be killed or will live through everything, and whichever it is, they merely shrug their shoulders, remark, "*C'est la guerre*," and permit nothing to alter their belief. Many say that the shell with their name on it has not yet been made, or if it has — "Why worry? We cannot escape it." I carried one man, while doing evacuation work, who had served three years without a scratch, and when *en repos* had fallen from an apple tree and broken his leg. He thought it a great joke.

The *ambulancier* has developed two of these instincts to quite a degree. The first is that he can always locate an *abri*, his or some one else's, and disappear in it with astounding rapidity. The second is that he can keep the road with no lights. This has to be done almost entirely by instinct on many nights, and

we find it usually safer to make a turn where the "inner voice" directs us rather than where we remember it should be. It is not remarkable, of course, that an occasional car falls into a ditch or a shell-hole, but astonishing rather how seldom this happens. While our Fords never attained any great speed in night driving, I rode once with a friend from another section in a Fiat, when he drove in pitch darkness faster than fifty miles an hour, taking every turn accurately and safely by instinct and luck.

THE mud plays havoc with calculations, and we long to set our foot once again on dry land. All the water in France seems to have gone into mud. Water has never been a popular beverage here, and now it is even less so. One horrified *poilu*, who had observed me drinking a glass of water, asked if it did not give me indigestion. At the front

there is good reason for this. With so many men buried in the ground and so many animals uninterred on it, all the springs are contaminated, and the germs of every disease lurk in the water.

The French army provides a light red wine to take its place. This wine is little stronger than grape juice and is the *Pinard* of the *poilus*. The government also provides tobacco which, to quote one *ambulancier*, cannot be smoked without a gas mask.

The water in the streams is little better, and a bath in one of them gives more moral than physical satisfaction. One French artilleryman told me with great glee of seeing from his observation post a company of German soldiers marched down to a river for a bath. As soon as they were in the water he signalled the range to his battery, and they put a barrage between the bathers and their clothes.

VERDUN is more than a name now — it is a symbol. France's glorious fight here with her back to the wall has gone down in history as a golden page. The foe thundered at the gates and the gates held, — held for months while the fate of France hung in the balance, and then opening, the hosts of France poured out and drove the foe back mile by mile, bitter miles.

The city does not boast an unscarred building, but these wounds do not bleed in vain. For every one here there shall be two across the frontier when the day of reckoning comes. An awe-inspiring silence broods over the littered streets. There are no civilians here now, but many soldiers, and as one walks an occasional cheer greets him, — "*Vive l'Amérique!*"

The enemy has been driven back so far by this time that not more than half a

dozen vengeful shells a day are directed towards the violated cathedral, its subterranean vaults blown open and exposed, its walls struck, its windows shattered, and its roof fallen. A walk through this city, divided by the peaceful Meuse, would convince one, if nothing had before, that this war is not in vain, and that no force should be spared, no rest taken until the nation which has perpetrated these million crimes be crushed, that it may never strike like this again.

A BATTLE is made up of a number of attacks, and a push consists of a number of battles. Consequently, each attack is most important as it is one of the single stones out of which the wall of the push is constructed. The taking of A—— was a small attack in itself, but it was a part of the foundation on which was built the great August push at Verdun.

Our section rolled into a town about

four miles from A—— three days before the attack proper was scheduled to begin. We established our headquarters there, and our relay-station and *poste de secours* in the Hesse Forest, the latter just behind the third-line trenches.

In the Champagne push the year before the French had not had nearly enough artillery support, and it had cost them many lives. It is something one hears spoken of rarely. To avoid a repetition of this disaster they had massed for this attack in one wood six thousand guns varying in calibre from the famous 75's to several batteries of 380's, mounted on a railroad a stone's throw from our sleeping quarters. However, as we had no time for sleep, it made little difference. The 75 is about a three-inch gun, and the 380, a sixteen approximately.

Starting in three days before the attack, these guns began firing as steadily as they could without overheating. Very often

in our front *abri* it was impossible to write because of the vibration. One day, when we stopped in the woods to change a punctured tire, the car was knocked off the jack by the shocks several times before we could remove the tire, and at last we had to run in on the rim.

Finally, just before the men were to go over the top, the barrage was set down in front of the trenches and the men climbed over the parapet, and started walking towards the enemy. It is always possible to tell the *tir de barrage* by the sound of the guns. There is a certain regularity which is lacking when each gun is firing at independent targets, and the steady thunder gives one the feeling of a tremendous hammer smashing, smashing, irresistibly, each blow falling true and hard, and following one another with the regularity of the machines in a giant factory.

A perfect barrage is impenetrable, with

the shells falling so near together and with such short intervals of time between that nothing can survive it. The only possibility is the inaccuracy of some one or more guns which will put a number of shells out of the line and leave a break or opening.

Before the attack the officers all have their watches carefully synchronized, as a mistake of one minute may cost many lives. Walking ahead of their men, keeping them the right distance behind the solid wall of flame and steel, they wait until a certain minute when the barrage is lifted a number of yards and then advance to that distance. In the orders, the minute the barrage is to be lifted and the distance are given out beforehand; for to advance the soldiers too quickly would be to put them under fire from their own guns.

In this attack the first wave passed over the destroyed wire, and on reaching

the enemy's front-line trenches could not distinguish them from the rest of the ground, and found no living thing there. The second-line trenches were little better, and they got their fighting at the third-line trenches. So perfect had the preparation and execution of this attack been that the Bois d'A—— was cleared of the enemy in thirteen minutes from the time the French left their trenches.

The first wave is followed by the "butchers" (the English "moppers-up"), who kill all the wounded and the odd prisoners, it being impractical for a charging line to attempt to hold a few captives. Also another factor which makes this treatment of prisoners necessary, and which the Allies have learned by experience, is that unguarded men, once the first wave has passed over them, will take out a machine gun and catch the advancing troops between two fires. This happened a number of times before the

simple expedient was adopted of requesting the prisoners to go down into an *abri* where they would be "safer," and then tossing in two or three grenades which kill and bury them at the same time.

Of course the Boche was not idle in the meanwhile, and kept up a hail of fire from behind A—— Wood and Dead Man's Hill, which did not fall until two days later, and we had the benefit of this back on the roads as we tore from the relay-station to the *poste*, to the hospital, and back again, trying to take care of as many as we could of the countless wounded from the attack who were being brought in. French soldiers who had been in the war since 1914 said that they had never seen such fire.

This run and the work through this attack were the most interesting of the experiences I had in the zone. We worked day and night, sleeping and eating at odd

moments and with long intervals between, ceasing only when twelve of our cars had gone *en panne*, and half that number of drivers were in the hospital suffering from the new mustard gas which was showered on us in gas shells. We were tired indeed when relieved for a short period *en repos*.

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TAKING A LOAD FROM THE ABRI

V

L'ENVOI

AN American army is in France. Old Glory is proudly floating above an armed host which has come to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Allies, and do battle to prove that Right makes Might. We read in the papers of the ovations the troops receive, of the reviews, the presentations, the compliments, and the training, and our hearts beat proudly because we too are Americans. We are non-combatants, to be sure, and are members not of the American army but of the French; yet, we are serving in the same cause, and, we hope, doing our bit towards the final victory.

We know that sooner or later the entire American Field Service is to be absorbed by the American army, but as to when this is to come, and in what manner, we are ignorant. We debate often now

about these things, and wonder what effect the change is to have on us and on the section. Pessimist has picked up a rumor somewhere that we are to be turned out in a body, and that drivers who have been training at Allentown are to take our places. Cheerful Liar informs us that we are all to be made first lieutenants, and that the section is to serve with the American troops. "Napoleon" thinks that we are to be discharged, and that French drivers who "know their business" are to take our places. Some one else says that we are all to be put in the trenches. No one knows anything definite, and the *chef* and *sous-chefs* are besieged for information which they have not. The Assistant Inspector comes out to us and we know little more. American officers encountered in Bar-le-Duc can give us no information, and rumors, most of them originating in the section, contradict each other.

One evening a large Pierce Arrow pulls up beside our cars, parked in a walnut grove. Three American medical officers step out with clanking spurs, and we are all attention. The *chef* is called and we assemble. The officer in command makes a short speech. The section is to be taken over, he says, and those who remain must enlist as privates in the American army for the duration of the war. These men, having signed up, are then at the disposal of the Army, but will probably be kept in the Ambulance Service. The new officers are to be an American lieutenant, who will be our present *chef*, two sergeants, and a corporal. The section is to continue to serve with the French army, but may be transferred to the new American front.

We form small circles and discuss the situation. All the freedom and romance are gone, but many are going to stay. The rest have chosen aviation or artillery,

and one or two may return home. The old volunteer Ambulance Service is dead, but the days we have lived with it are golden, and nothing can ever take them away from us, or bring them back again.

There is a little lump in each man's throat as he turns in tonight, but from now on we serve America, and any sacrifice is worth that. And for the rest — "*C'est la guerre.*"

THE participation of the United States in this war marks the time of this country's coming of age, and the real beginning of its work as one of the great world powers. Up to the War of the Revolution the thirteen colonies had more than enough on their hands in managing their own affairs. In the throes of that war the country was born, and slowly grew, feeling its increasing power which was never quite secure until the Civil War was at an end. Then, year by year,

reaching out over the two continents of America, guiding and helping our weaker brothers in their affairs, gave us a foundation of courage and experience in the adolescent period before we were ready to stand forth staunch in our beliefs and secure in our power to uphold them. That that time has come, and that the Old World, throwing down the gauntlet to the New, has found it unexpectedly ready, is shown by the presence of the Stars and Stripes on the battlefields of France. The mask of our isolation by the ocean, that time-worn excuse, has been rudely torn aside by modern inventions, and the affairs of Europe have become by their intimacy our own. In mingling with them as we were forced to do, one side was bound to transgress sooner or later — Germany did. And when Germany transgressed, America stepped across the bridge from youth to manhood, and picking up the iron gaunt-

let proceeded to settle the question by force of arms, — the one indisputable argument.

This war is to make Democracy secure only in that it is the continual struggle between the new and the old, a struggle whose issue is certain before the start — civilization moves to the west.

America is the vanguard of the European civilization moving westward. It has taken the sum of the civilizations of the earth to bridge the chasm of the Atlantic. America is the last section of the circle of the world, which completed, civilization moves back to its starting place. Power increases with civilization and, with each step civilization has taken, the conquests have been proportionate. Each has tried world conquest and failed, but each has come nearer and each time the world has been nearer ready to receive it. The present war is the attempt of a representative of the civilization of

Europe to control the earth, and proving *per se* its unfitness to do so.

Consequently, the relation of America to the War is that she is coming of age, and is at last ready to take her place among the great nations of the world as a power that can never again be disregarded, a mighty guardian of the Right.

AMERICA has been aptly called the Melting Pot. Since 1620, when the Pilgrims established their permanent colony at Plymouth, people from the Old World have been flocking to this country and becoming "Americans." Every country of the globe has sent its representatives — each a different metal to be merged with the others until the American should be as distinct a type as the Englishman or Frenchman. At first there was natural discord — each was a different metal in the melting pot, but as there was no heat, no fire, they could not

amalgamate. Then came the first blast of national fire — the Revolution, and in that, the first great struggle for Liberty, was moulded from the composite alloys — the American. The American as he came from the mould of the Revolution was the foundation on which the country rests, and although the descendants of those Americans are too few in number now to be more than a flux for the steady stream of metal as it pours from the pot, they can at least preserve the standard that their forebears passed down to them as the Golden Heritage, and be examples to these new and untried metals.

In the War of 1812 and in the Civil War the new metals were amalgamated and tempered with the old, but since 1864 there has been no fire hot enough to mould together the millions who have sought the United States as a home. There has been no sword over our heads. There has been no great impending

disaster, no danger to the country as a whole of great loss of life or property, and our Liberty and our Honor have not been at stake as they are today.

So it is now in this fierce blast from Hell's furnace, the Great War, that the National fire is rekindled and each metal is slowly sinking its own individuality into the common form carefully stirred by the hand of the Almighty, and in the white heat, as the pure metal is tempered until it rings true and measures to the old standard, the slag is cast aside. Thus is America the Melting Pot.

PARIS is the place where everything begins and ends. From here during the four years of war there has been the constant departure of men bound for the great adventure, and it is Paris that has received with open arms the greater bulk of the *permissionnaires* and the *réformés*. Gay, very gay on the surface, but below

the crust it is the saddest of all places. When a man is in great agony he laughs. It is so with the great city, and the laugh of delirium is a poor sham indeed.

The shortage of necessities has also been a damper on the city. In Neuilly, a suburb of Paris, a man was carrying a bag of coal. A few paces behind him a well-dressed woman was walking home. The man dropped a piece of coal from his sack and the woman eagerly picked it up and placed it in her gold bag.

The war hangs over all in a dismal cloud and is in the back of every one's mind; although it is rare to hear it mentioned it is always before one. There is no Parisian who has not lost some one very dear to him or her, and nineteen out of every twenty women are in deep mourning. The social activities, therefore, are greatly curtailed, and the gay life is left only to the people of the street, the majority of whom have been driven

to that life by the reaction of despair and sadness, and in lonesomeness seek the only companionship that they know.

THE old chateau at 21, rue Raynouard, so kindly loaned to the American Field Service for its headquarters by the Comtesse de la Villestreux, is a place of traditions. The great Napoleon has walked here. Rousseau wrote part of his works here, and Franklin walked in the park daily while he was Ambassador to France.

The park is the most extensive and beautiful within the fortifications of Paris, and contains the largest grove of chestnuts in the city. The water in the springs on the place was famous in the seventeenth century as the "*eaux de Passy.*"

In the shadow of the Eiffel Tower, located on the banks of the Seine, the place breathes an atmosphere of rest and beauty and solidity, springing from the

traditions of age. The men of the American Field Service, we who have had this place as the home to which we would return *en permission*, can never fully express our sincere gratitude to the Comtesse de la Villestreux and the other members of the Hottinguer family, who so graciously extended to us, Americans, the hospitality of their beautiful estate.

A DREAM of a town, hot but not oppressive under the sun of the Midi, with quaint streets meandering through it, little blue tables set in the sunlight and a park filled with gay-colored soldiers and drab women, was my first impression of Bordeaux. Dilapidated *fiacres* in tow of hungry horses transport one from place to place, and give the newcomer his first taste of the haggling, without which a Latin would be disconsolate.

For all its quaintness and simplicity it is as much a "pay as you enter" city

as the rest, and even in the park should one sit upon an iron seat instead of a wooden one there is an indemnity of two *sous* extracted and a further *sou* should the seat possess arms. A damsel in black then presents a ticket which entitles the possessor to hold down the seat as long as he comfortably can. The military may sit free, however, if they know it; but the new arrivals do not, and the park fund increases.

Bordeaux on my return I found to be quite Americanized. The quiet uniforms of our soldiers were neutralizing the bright reds and blues of our ally. The little blue tables were often covered by a khaki arm, and many new signs proclaimed "American Bar," those houses which had specialized in German beers before the war having painted "American" over the name of the Rhine country.

There is a large American hospital here completely equipped and ready to receive

and take good care of the flood that will soon be pouring in. An American private telephone line has been built to Paris by Americans, and with our gradual assimilation of the railway system of France we are "carrying on" well from here.

THE American Ambulance, the American Field Service as it was in the old days, is dead. The spirit of *bonne camaraderie* and intimacy which each member felt for the others; the time when, members of no army, we served with the French, on equal terms with the *poilus* in the trenches and the officers on the staff; when, responsible to no one, we served the cause and the god Adventure, content with the past and with no thought for the morrow, — has passed. With the coming of army discipline and system, with governmental organization and routine, the old days are gone. We are sorry, selfishly, to see them go; but

we cannot and would not have it otherwise. The Ambulance Service is now proudly enrolled under Old Glory, and is broader and greater than it ever could have been as a volunteer organization. We rejoice that it is so, and are proud that we have been a part of it. So, hail to the new United States Army Ambulance Corps! The men of the Old Ambulance salute you!

A LITTLE group of us stands together in the darkness, with the deck rising and falling beneath our feet. We are silent and pensive. The last lights of Bordeaux are fading in the mist, and with them France. The boat has been running up and down the wide harbor all day, and now in the darkness is making a dash for the open sea, hoping to outwit the enemy lurking in the depths.

Up there, far to the north of those lights, the great guns thunder and the

sky glimmers with star-shells. Men are fighting, and struggling, and dying, and laughing over their *Pinard*, but it is not for us. We have finished for a while. Of course we are coming back, but furlough is not offered often enough to be refused lightly. We feel a queer mixture of sadness, and happiness, and relief. The life has worked its way into our hearts, and the call to return rings in our ears. But the relief from the tenseness and the joy of anticipation of America and Home exceeds all else. The wind blowing across the waves starts somewhere in America, and we take deep breaths. Soon we shall be home, shall see our friends, and shall lead a life of luxurious ease again for a short space of time.

We walk around the deck and then, taking out our pipes, settle down in our steamer chairs and puff thoughtfully. All is peace and quietness here, the spray breaking over the bow and the waves

lapping against the sides. It is hard to realize that the earth is shaking in a cataclysm only a little north, but we know that this must be endured until the power of Germany is destroyed — that the world may be as peaceful as is the sea tonight.

GLOSSARY

[*The meaning of the words as given in this Glossary is that which holds in the army at the front and sometimes conflicts with the meaning as given in the dictionary.*]

Abri	*dug-out*
Ambulancier	*ambulance driver*
Argot	*slang*
Arrivée	*an enemy shell*
Assis	*a wounded man able to sit up*
Blessé	*wounded man*
Bonne camaraderie	*good-fellowship*
Bonne chance	*good luck*
Boyaux	*communication trench*
Brancardier	*stretcher-bearer*
Briquet	*pocket lighter*
Camion	*truck*
Camionnette	*small truck*
Chef	*first lieutenant*
Conducteur	*ambulance driver*
Contre-avion	*anti-aircraft gun*

Couché	*a wounded man lying down*
Croix de guerre	*war cross*
Départ	*a shell fired towards the enemy*
Dud	*a shell which does not explode*
Éclat	*shell fragment*
En Panne	*breakdown*
En Permission	*on furlough*
En Repos	*on a rest*
Estaminet	*café*
Major	*army surgeon*
Malade	*sick man*
Maréchal des logis	*French petty officer*
Mauvais temps	*rainy season*
Médaille militaire	*military medal*
Minniewerfer	*German trench mortar*
Mort Homme	*Dead Man's Hill*
Musette	*haversack*
Peloton	*section*
Permission	*furlough*

Permissionnaire	*man on furlough*
Pinard	*wine*
Pionnier	*a branch of the Engineers*
Poste de Secours	*front dressing station for wounded*
Ravitaillement	*provisioning*
Réformé	*soldier discharged on account of wounds*
Roll	*to drive*
Rôti	*shell which does not explode*
Saucisse	*observation balloon*
Soixante-quinze	*75 mm. shell*
Sous-chef	*second lieutenant*
Straf	*to shell* (literally, *to curse*)
Tir de barrage	*barrage fire*
Torpille	*trench mortar shell*
Verboten	*forbidden*
Ville haute	*upper city*

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